

LET THE CHILDREN **PLAY**

ACEL webinar series Part 3: Learning through play

20th August 2020

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ACEL webinar series: Let the Children Play

PART 1: THE STATE OF PLAY

- What do we know about children's play today?
- Why we need to talk about the importance of play?
- Who are the real advocates of children's play?
- Where are interesting things happening today in play?

6th August 2020

PART 2: THE POWER OF PLAY

- What is play?
- Why is play important to children?
- What are doctors telling us about play?
- How to tell the story to those in doubt?

13th August 2020

PART 3: LEARNING THROUGH PLAY

- What is learning through play?
- What is blocking learning through play?
- What do Finnish schools do?
- Play in a pandemic

20th August 2020

Questions from webinar 2:

1. Do you think the fact that children can start formal primary school from as young as 4 1/2 in Australia has had an effect on the decline of play in childhood? How can we address this?
2. Is there evidence to support play in developing resilience and having a protective function in preventing mental health conditions in children?
3. Are there researched play based pedagogical approaches for primary schools that you would recommend?

LEARNING THROUGH PLAY

Learning through play

WHAT IS IT?

Learning through play is a process of joyful, engaging, meaningful, iterative and socially interactive experience.

It helps to develop active, resilient, confident and creative citizens.

WHAT DOES IT?

Learning through play enhances healthy development, acquisition of knowledge and meta-cognitive skills (e.g. executive functions).

The benefits of learning through play differ across contexts and cultures.

WHAT TO DO?

Research learning through play in different cultures.

Well-controlled studies investigating how play promotes higher-order skills.

How the benefits of play vary from context to context.

Learning through play

Free, unstructured
play

Guided play

Games, structured
play

Direct instruction



Child-led

Adult-led

Policy barriers

➔ Industrial model of school

➔ Academic model of intelligence

➔ Production model of learning

Parents say

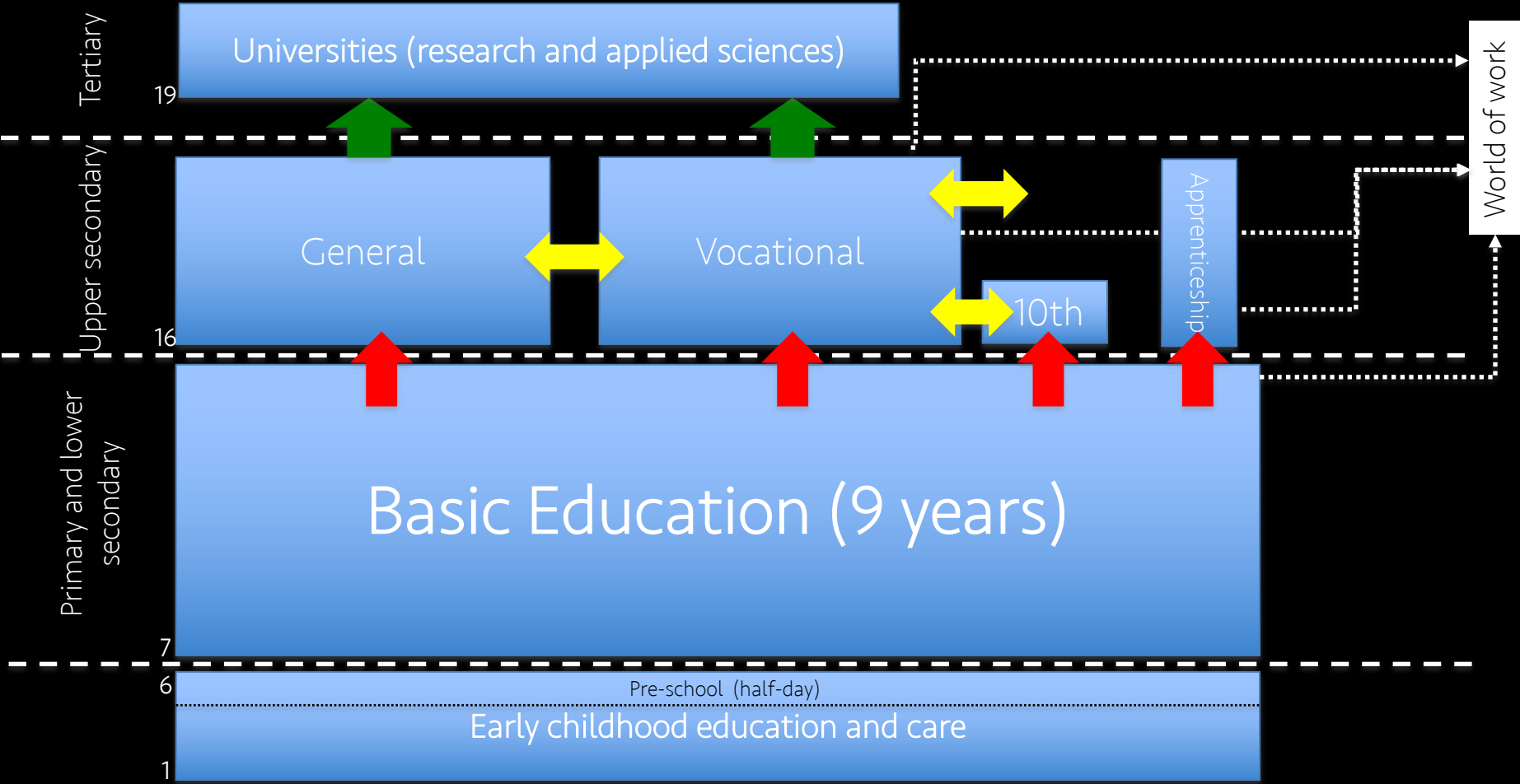
Almost all parents acknowledge the benefits of play but just half want more time for play at school.

Parents believe that their children will benefit more from structured activities as opposed to unstructured free play.

Parenting paradigms are shifting to overprotecting children from risk-taking.

PLAY IN FINNISH SCHOOLS

Education system in Finland (2020)



Early years (0 to 6)

Age 0 to 1: Children stay home

Age 1 to 3: About 50% children in kindergartens

Age 3 to 5: 85% in kindergartens

Age 6: 100% in half-day pre-school

Age 7: Primary school begins for all

Early years (0 to 6)

1. **Play is children's right in Finland.** It is protected by international declarations and national legislation:
 - every child has right to play-based early childhood education and care
 - every child has an Individual Learning Plan in early childhood education
2. **Learning through play** has a significant role in promoting children's well-being, interaction with others, and learning essential skills.
3. **National Core Curriculum for Early Childhood Education and Care:** "The purpose of ECEC is to promote children's holistic growth, development and learning in collaboration with their guardians. Understanding the importance and pedagogical possibilities of play for the child in the promotion of wellbeing and learning is essential for ECEC."

Primary school (7 to 12)

1. **Playful learning in early years.** Schools design their own curriculum according to National Core Curriculum for Basic Education.
 - Whole-child approach (e.g. Transversal competences)
 - Regular 15-minute breaks every hour
2. **Learning through play** has an important role in promoting children's well-being, creativity, and learning essential knowledge and skills.
3. **Authentic assessment allows more playful learning:** Children are not assessed using grades before Year 4 when all students must be assessed using scale 4 to 10. No external standardised assessments.

Secondary school (13 to 18)

1. Time for recess and self-directed play
2. Playful school environment
3. Teaching methods that enable learning through play

“The Finns, protect childhood. They see childhood as a time that should be joyful and stress free for children. They understand the research behind Play Based Learning and as such recognise that providing quality play (indoors and outdoors) for children in the early years will have a strong positive effect on children’s academic and social outcomes in the future. They recognise Play as THE pedagogy for children. From the age of seven, classes become more explicit (playful) lessons. A child attends school for four to five, short, sharp 45-minute lessons with 15-minute play breaks in between each lesson. After these lessons the school day finishes and children go to afternoon “clubs” or home to play. From year 1- 6 Finnish children play and engage in their interests, for at least half of every school day.”

-Sascha Colley

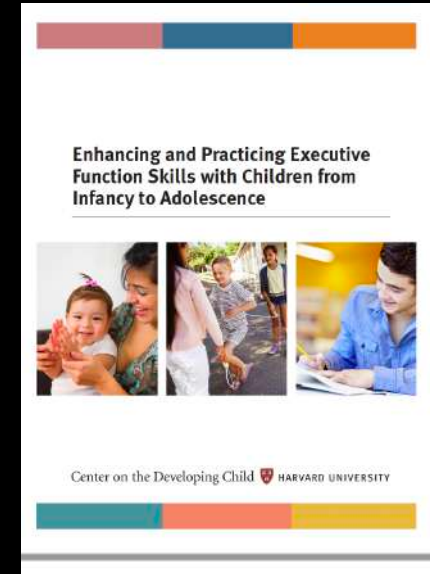
PLAY IN A PANDEMIC

Safety and health first

Outdoor learning whenever possible

Synchronize recess

Some useful open access readings:



Some useful links:

1. Play Australia <https://www.playaustralia.org.au>
2. Learning Through Play <https://learningthroughplay.com.au>
3. Lego Foundation <https://www.legofoundation.com/en/>
4. Center on Media and Child Health <https://cmch.tv/moreplaytoday/>

**„I believe this passionately that we don't
grow into creativity; we grow out of it or
rather we get educated out of it. “**



**Sir Ken Robinson
1950 -**

THANK YOU!